

Message Text

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SUBJ: PLENARY SESSION OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT UNDERWAY

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SUMMARY: IMPORTANT PLENARY SESSION OF REPS OF AFM IN THREE SERVICES MEETS TODAY TO DISCUSS AND PERHAPS TAKE ACTION ON NUMBER OF KEY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TOPICS SUCH AS AFM PARTICIPATION IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND INTERIM ECONOMIC PLAN OF GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENTLY CREATED ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT WILL HOLD ITS FIRST SESSION BEGINNING 1000 DECEMBER 6. ACCORDING TO PRESS IN ORDER TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT POLITICAL ECONOMIC AND MILITARY QUESTIONS. ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES IS COMPOSED OF 200 AFM REPS OF WHICH 100 FROM ARMY, AND 50 EACH FROM NAVY AND AIR FORCE. ASSEMBLY MEETING WILL ALLOW SERVICES

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TO HOLD FIRST INTERSERVICE AFM GATHERING IN A NUMBER OF MONTHS.

(COMMENT: MANY PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO HOLD "PLENARIES" APPARENTLY WERE BLOCKED WHILE SPINOLA PRESIDENT. ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS THE AFM LEADERSHIP OPPOSED PLENARIES OUT OF A FEAR THAT SPINOLA WOULD USE THEM TO ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE AFM TO ABOLISH ITS COORDINATING COMMITTEE, A PROSPECT WHICH IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED LIKELY.)

2. PRESS SPECULATES ASSEMBLY CALLED AT THIS JUNCTURE IN TIME IN ORDER TO A) ANALYZE NATIONAL SITUATION IN GENERAL AND TAKE NOTE OF GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS TO MEET CERTAIN PRESSING NATIONAL PROBLEMS; B) DISCUSS SO-CALLED "EMERGENCY ECONOMIC PLAN" NOW UNDER PREPARATION BY GOVERNMENT (SEE REFTEL FOR BACKGROUND ON THESE EXPECTED NEW ECONOMIC GUIDELINES); AND C) DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT AFM WILL PARTICIPATE IN WORK CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND IF SO, IN WHAT FORM.

3. DISCUSSION OF THESE AND PERHAPS OTHER SUBJECTS EXPECTED TO LAST MOST OF TODAY AND PERHAPS SOME OF TOMMOROW. IN FIRST PHASE OF ASSEMBLY BOTH PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER, MEMBERS COORDINATING COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS OTHER MILITARY OFFICERS HOLDING CABINET LEVEL POSITIONS, EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE.

4. MORNING O SEUCLO STATES THAT ALTHOUGH POLITICAL TOPICS WILL BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, WITHOUT A DOUBT SUBJECT OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE WILL BE NEW ECONOMIC PLAN, WHICH WILL COME UP FOR CABINET DISCUSSION AT NEXT MONDAY'S SESSION, AND WHICH MAJ. MELO ANTUNES HAS CALLED "A SECOND AFM PROGRAM" NEW ECONOMIC PLAN, IN HIS WORDS, WILL BE "EMANCIPATORY" FOR NATION AND WILL BE SPECIFIC TOLL WITH WHICH NATION CAN FULFILL GENERAL ANTI-MONOPOLIST STRATEGY CALLED FOR IN AFM PROGRAM. PLAN WILL ALSO PROVIDE NEEDED CLARIFICATION TO PRESENT GOVERNMENTAL ECONOMIC POLICY. ANTUNES TOLD REPORTERS THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR "FRIGHT" BY BUSINESSMEN, AS PLAN WILL NOT BE "ADVERTUROUS," ALTHOUGH IT WILL HELP MOVE PORTUGAL TOWARDS A SOCIETY IN WHICH NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS ARE ESTABLISHED.

5. QUESTION OF AFM PARTICIPATION IN WORK CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ALSO LIKELY TO BE MAIN DISCUSSION SUBJECT AT ASSEMBLY. SOME MILITARY OFFICERS, NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO INCLUDED, WANT THE AFM TO DESIGNATE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF AM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEMBERS TO SIT IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO OVERSEE DRAFTING AND VOTING ON NEW CONSTITUTION. IN VIEW OF THESE PERSONS AFM MEMBERS WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE ELECTED BY PEOPLE TO THEIR SEATS IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, SINCE "PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN IN LAST SEVEN MONTHS THAT THEY SUPPORT AFM." (COMMENT: ELECTORAL LAW PROHIBITS ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS FROM BEING CANDIDATES IN ELECTIONS, BUT DOES NOT PROHIBIT THEIR PARTICIPATION EITHER AS NON-VOTING OBSERVERS OR FULLY EMPOWERED DEPUTIES APPOINTED BY

AFM ITSELF.)

6. COMMENT: LITTLE IS KNOWN AT PRESENT OF THE POWERS AND
RELATIONSHIP OF ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES TO REGULAR MILITARY
HEIRARCHY OR TO CABINET AND COUNCIL OF STATE. WE ARE AWAITING
WITH INTEREST OUTCOME OF ASSEMBLY DELIBERATIONS WHICH SHOULD
HELP ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. NATURE OF DECISIONS TAKEN SHOULD
ALSO GIVE US AN IDEA OF FUTURE IDEOLOGICAL DIRECTION OF AFM
POLICY, ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC FIELD. WE ALSO INTERESTED IN
WHETHER AFM INTENDS TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE DRAFTING OF NEW
CONSTITUTION BY DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN ASSEMBLY'S WORK, OR
WHETHER IT WILL DECIDE TO TAKE ANOTHER LESS VISIBLE AND RISKY
TACK, SUCH AS PRESENTING ITS OWN CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFT TO
ASSEMBLY, OR ASSUMING VETO POWERS OVER CIVILIAN ASSEMBLY
PRODUCT.

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